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ABSTRACT

This book of play activities for children from 2 months to 2 years of age is designed to be used by parents, caregivers, or child care students. The games described include activities for motor, language and cognitive development, self-concept development, and interpersonal relationships. The games are grouped into eight series based on the child's age or developmental level. The descriptions of the games include the position of the parent and child, the actions involved, the goal and purpose of the game, and related activities of further extensions of the game. Each description also includes illustrations to help clarify the activities involved. In addition to the classification of the games by age, a list at the end of the book also groups the games according to the learning activity involved. (BD)

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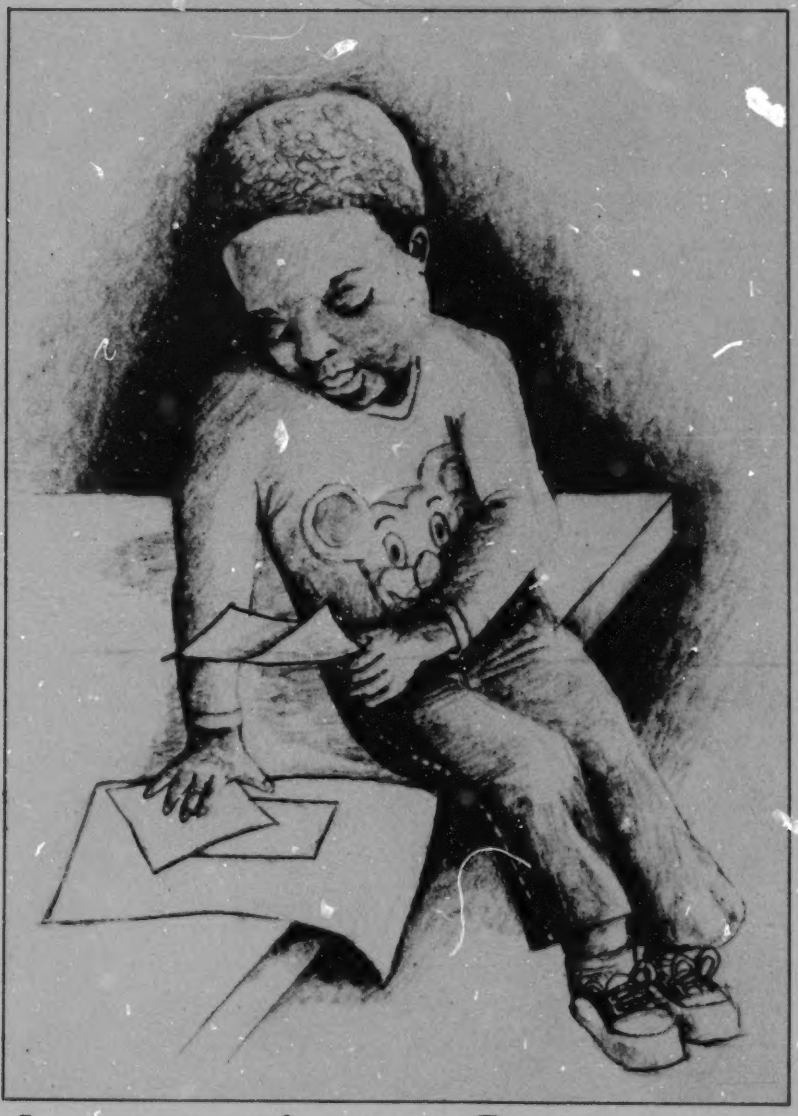

Learning Games

for Infants and Toddlers

by Dr. J. Ronald Lally and Dr. Ira J. Gordon

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Learning Games
for Infants and Toddlers

A Playtime Handbook

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PS 009762

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How to Use This Book

You can play the games in this book with infants and toddlers. This includes children from about two months to two years of age.

These games are more than just fun. Babies learn through play. These games help children:

- to use their bodies
- to learn language
- to begin to think
- to feel good about themselves
- to feel good about the person caring for them, you.

Through play, babies learn that they can make things happen with their hands, legs, eyes, and voices. Play helps babies learn what to expect when they do certain things.

Babies need games to help them with this learning. Games let them look at, listen to, taste, smell, and handle interesting things. They learn to listen to, watch, and talk to people while playing games. Games help babies develop their bodies and minds.

Games for different ages

You will find eight series of games in this book. The order of the series should nearly match the way your child develops. The games in Series One are beginning games. The games in Series Two are more advanced, and so on. Children can advance from one series to the next at their own rate.

In each series, you do not have to start with Game 1. You can play Game 7 first, and then Game 2, if you want to. Start with any game in the series.

Games for different interests

We have tried all the games in this book with many babies. Some babies liked the quiet games. Others liked more active games. We learned for sure that no two babies are alike. So we included many different kinds of games in this book. They will match the different interests of different children. Choose games that match your baby's interest and mood.

Feel free to skip any game that doesn't fit your child. Perhaps later on your child will enjoy the games you skipped.

Sometimes you will find that your baby doesn't enjoy a game he or she once liked. Perhaps the game has become too easy. Your baby may be bored with it. This is when you can use *your* ideas to change the game a bit. This may make the game more challenging for your baby.

The games in this book are only suggestions. Change the games to match your child's interests. For example, Game 2 in Series One uses keys. If your child isn't interested in keys, try something else – maybe a rattle. See if that will interest your baby.

Is it fun? Your baby will tell you!

It is good to keep in mind that you are *playing* with your baby. Don't force your child to play a game a certain way. These are not school lessons. They are not something to be learned no matter how your child feels. It is important that the baby and you *enjoy* these games.

You will soon learn to tell when your baby wants to play. Smiling, cooing, reaching for your hand are signs that your baby might want to play. You will also learn to tell when your baby is tired or hungry. Crying or fussing are ways a baby tells you it's time to change the game or stop.

Your baby may want to stay with a game long after you have tired of it. Try not to stop your child's fun and learning just because you are ready to go on.

Simple toys are best

The playthings in this book are simple. You won't need to buy costly toys. Children like to play with things that you use in the home. They learn a great deal from handling these things.

Comments from people who have played these games

Finally, some words of counsel. The games in this book have been used by thousands of adults and infants. We have learned much from those who used the games. And we want to share with you the collected wisdom from their comments. This will help you and your baby get much more from the book. So please keep the following comments in mind as you use the book.

1. Don't race. Don't try to move your child rapidly through the book. This won't be fun for

your child. And no fun usually means no learning. So racing is a waste of time. It can also be harmful if you expect too much from the child.

2. Pay more attention to the Purpose. You will see the *Aim of the game* and *Purpose* included with each game. Pay more attention to the *Purpose*. That is what you want your child to learn. Your infant may not do the actions in the *Aim*. Yet your child may still be learning what you want – the *Purpose*.

3. Make the games part of your day-to-day life. For example, you can do many *Eyes-and-hands games* while you do other things. Play them while you are diapering, visiting with friends, and even while you are working. Try not to set up a 30-minute game time each day. Instead, play with your child at many different times during the day.

4. Free play is important. During the games, you will use objects in a planned way. Your child may also want to play with those objects in his or her own way. For example, your child may play alone for many minutes with the spindle in Game 2 of Series Eight. This free play is important. Children use it to explore on their own. They begin to trust themselves during free play.

5. Watch your baby. Spend much time watching what your baby does with you and with playthings. You may get so involved in what *you're* doing that you forget to watch what the *baby* is doing. And your baby will do many interesting things that you might not expect. So lean back, relax, and learn from the show. It's beautiful.

6. Break the games up into small steps so the child can succeed. This will help you find ways to help your child reach the game's purpose. Several small steps are easier to learn from than one big step. And the baby can feel he has succeeded several times instead of maybe failing once.

7. Change the playthings. Use other playthings besides the ones listed in the games. Make sure the playthings you use are interesting to your child. Let's say your infant is learning the idea that things don't disappear. Your child will learn this better if you use different playthings at different times.

8. Be flexible. Change games when infants don't enjoy them. Create a new game that gets at the same purpose. For ideas, look over the suggestions under *What else you can do* at the end of each game. Also, see the *Games Listed According to Learning Areas* on page 80.

Let your child take the lead once in a while. Don't expect 100 percent success. Do not do the tasks rigidly. Don't teach. Let your infant learn.

9. Remember, each child is different. The age ranges given for each series are only general guides. They may not fit your child exactly. Your child's growth in learning will speed up for a while. Then it will slow down. Then it will speed again. Don't worry if your child is in a slow period while your friend's child is learning quickly. Go along with your infant's rate of learning. Watch for and do the things that interest your baby today.

10. Warning: Your style of play is important. Children learn about your love, warmth, and approval through the games. They can also learn about your disapproval, coldness, and withholding of love. Build warm feelings between you and your infant through the learning games. Have fun with your infant. Enjoy the games.

Do you see these games as play? If so, you and your child will enjoy each other as you play them. Children love to learn. Learning is natural for them. It occupies a great deal of their time.

Learning at home

We present this book as an aid to you and your baby. It's not a step-by-step guide for the education of the young. It's a beginning from which you can create your own games suited to your child.

We hope the book will help you and your child discover that:

- early learning can be fun
- the schoolroom is not the only place for education
- education is the day-to-day give and take of people, young and old alike.

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The Development of This Book

The games in this book were compiled in 1967 at the University of Florida. After being field-tested in hundreds of situations representing a wide variety of adult-child combinations, the games were improved and published in the book *Intellectual Stimulation for Infants and Toddlers.*

Since then, thousands of other persons have tested the games and suggested improvements. *Learning Games for Infants and Toddlers* is the result of all this testing and refinement.

Our Problem with Sex

None of the games in this book are for boys only or for girls only. But sometimes you'll find us talking about your child as "her." Sometimes we use the word "him." No matter what pronoun is used, the game is for boys and girls.

If we followed the old way of writing, we would use "he" and "him" and "his" only. We would say these male pronouns refer to both males and females. But somehow that doesn't seem fair. So we decided to use male pronouns in some games and female pronouns in other games. Until someone invents pronouns that include both sexes, why should male pronouns be the only ones used for both sexes?

Series One

Age: about 2 to 6 months

Series One games are for very young infants (about 2 to 6 months). They help your child learn in three areas:

1. They help in early communication (talking and listening) between you and your baby.
2. They help infants follow objects with their eyes and move their bodies toward the objects.
3. They let your child learn the feel of many different textures and shapes.

The *Communication games* let your infant get used to hearing your voice. And your infant will make baby sounds to talk back. These games also help you look into each other's eyes.

Eyes-and-hands and *Eyes-and-body games* develop three skills:

- They help your infant keep objects in view.
- They teach your child to bring objects into view.
- They help your child get his or her eyes and hands working together to touch and explore objects.

The *Using-the-senses games* help children collect information about different objects. This helps them begin to understand how objects can look and feel the same. These games also teach infants the differences between objects.

All the games in Series One can be played at a very young age. Yet many of them are still fun for older children. For example, Game 3 in this series can be played in different ways through the child's first few years. In this game, the child simply explores different kinds of objects. If you keep supplying new objects, your child will enjoy playing this game again and again.

Remember, watch for the signals your infant gives you. As soon as possible, move away from doing these games as special sessions. Fit them in here and there throughout your day. Change the games and playthings as you play at different times in the day.

The First Conversation

Communication game

Position

Baby's position: lying on back on the floor, bed, crib, or sofa.
Your position: kneeling at the baby's side.

Action

1. When your baby makes any sounds that are used in talking, tickle the baby's tummy and smile. These sounds are not crying, fussing, or noisy breathing.
2. Repeat the sounds your baby makes while looking into her eyes.
3. After making the sound, remain silent for five seconds. Keep looking into your baby's eyes.
4. Repeat the action.

Aim of the game

Your baby responds by making similar sounds.

Purpose

To help your child use her voice to communicate with other people.

What else you can do

Similar games: Series Two – 1,5,7; Series Three – 1; Series Four – 1.

Learning to Look

Eyes-and-ears game

Position

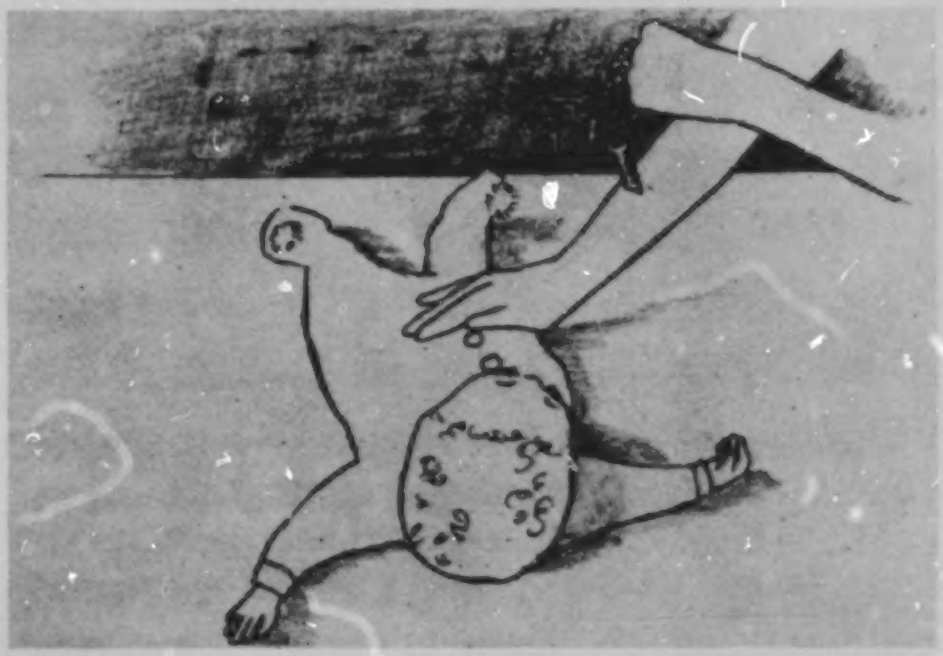
Baby's position: lying on back.

Your position: behind your baby's head with your hand on the baby's stomach. Try to keep your face away from the baby's gaze. You want the baby to watch the object and not you.

Note: Remove your hand from the baby's stomach if it distracts him.

Action

1. Hold a noise-making object, such as a ring of keys, about a foot above your baby's face.
2. Shake the object gently until your baby looks at it.
3. Watch your baby's eyes to see how he follows the object.
4. Move the object slowly in a circle, in the air, around your baby's head.
5. Change the direction of the circle.



Aim of the game

1. Your baby's eyes follow the object as it goes in a complete circle.
2. Your baby's eyes do not jerk back and forth.

Purpose

To help your baby pay attention to things and keep his eyes on them.

What else you can do

1. If your baby can't follow the object in a circle, make only part of a circle.
2. Over the baby's crib, put mobiles that may be watched as they move.
3. Move objects back and forth in a straight line in front of your baby.
4. Similar games: Series One – 4,6,7.

Getting the Feel of Things

Using-the-senses game

Position

Any relaxed position.

Action

1. Collect different types of objects (square, round, hard, soft, fuzzy, long, short, sticky) from around the house.
2. Present the objects to your baby one at a time. Select objects that won't hurt the baby. Let your baby explore them.
3. When your baby seems tired of one object, give her another one to explore.
4. Watch the movements your baby makes. Does your baby treat different objects differently? If so, this proves that your baby is beginning to learn to change her body movements to fit the objects explored.
5. How many ways does your infant have to explore the world?
   Examples: banging, mouthing, dropping, and rubbing.

Aim of the game

Your baby actively explores (feels, looks at, tastes, and so on) different objects when alone.

Purpose

1. To help your baby learn to tell the differences between objects by using the senses.
2. To help your baby discover ways to use her body differently with different objects.

What else you can do

Similar games: Series Two – 7; Series Five – 2; Series Eight – 5.

Turning to Look

Eyes-and-body game

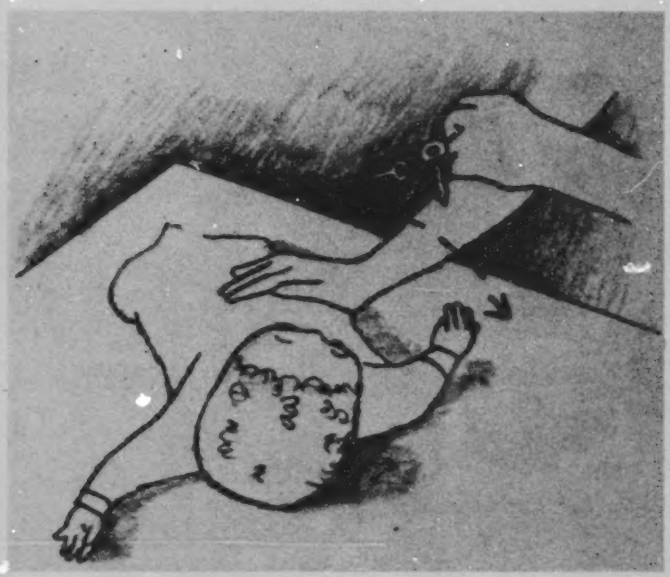
Position

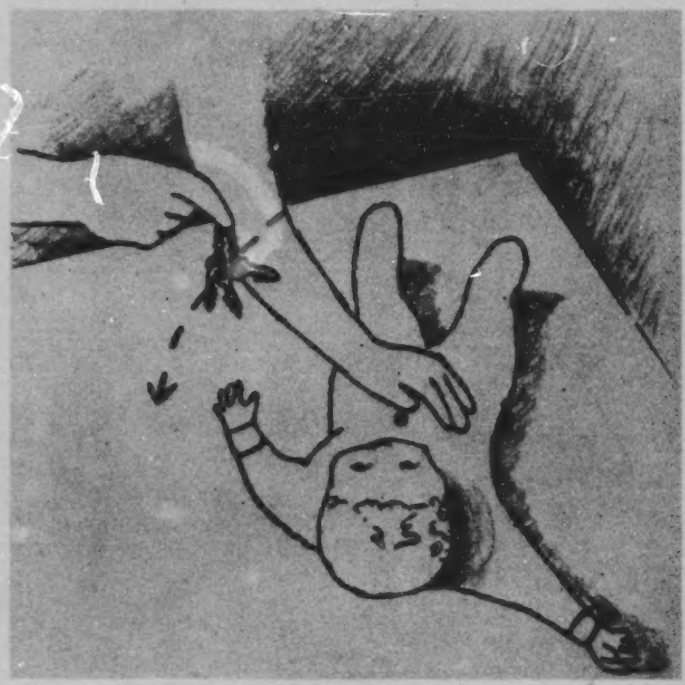
Baby's position: lying on back.

Your position: behind your baby's head with your hand on the baby's stomach. Try to keep your face away from the baby's gaze. Let the baby watch the object and not you.

Action

1. Hold a noise-making object, such as a ring of keys, in your right hand about 12 inches above your baby's nose.
2. Move the object in a curved line from this position until your hand rests on the surface of the bed or floor to the right of the baby.
3. Watch your baby's eyes to see how he follows. If the baby is having trouble following, slow down.
4. Return the object to starting position. Hold the object in your left hand and move it in a curved line to the other side until your hand rests on the surface of the bed or floor to the left of the baby.





Aim of the game

Your baby turns his head to follow the object.

Purpose

To help your baby get his body and eyes working together and find out how pleasant it is to do this.

What else you can do

1. Use your face as the object and move behind your baby.
2. Use your baby's bottle.
3. Similar games: Series One – 7,9; Series Two – 4.

What I Hear I Can See

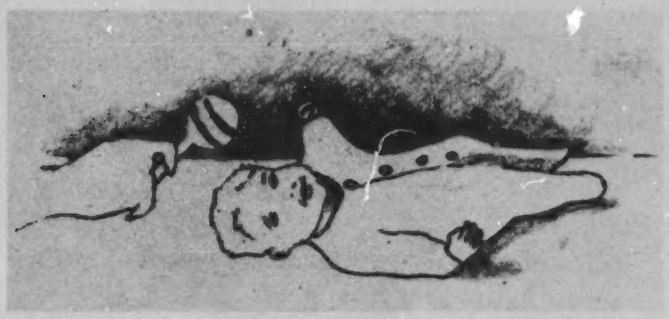
Ears-and-eyes game

Position

Baby's position: lying on back.
Your position: behind the baby and out of sight.

Action

1. Shake a rattle to the right of, and a little behind, your baby's head. Wait a few seconds.
2. Ask, "Where is the rattle?"
3. Shake a rattle to the left of, and a little behind, the baby's head. Wait a few seconds.
4. Ask, "Now, where is the rattle?"
5. Now, shake the rattle right above the top of the baby's head. Wait a few seconds.
6. Ask, "And now, where is the rattle?"



Aim of the game

Your baby turns her head toward the sound of the rattle.

Purpose

1. To get your baby to realize that her eyes, ears, and body can work together.
2. To help your baby begin to connect words with action.

What else you can do

1. Calling your baby's name while hiding or standing behind the baby.
2. Watching your baby's movement when sounds are made in the room.
3. Similar games: Series One – 7; Series Two – 4.

Grasping Things I Want

Eyes-and-hands game

Position

Baby's position: lying on back.
Your position: next to the baby.

Action

1. Hold a rattle about 12 inches above your baby's stomach. Shake the rattle until the baby looks at it, and say, "See the rattle."
2. Watch your baby's hand and eyes. Does his hand open before it gets to the rattle? Does the baby watch his hand? the rattle? both?
3. Move the rattle slowly toward your baby's hand so that the baby looks at his hand and the rattle at the same time. Now say, "Get the rattle." When your baby gets the rattle, smile and say, "Johnny has the rattle." (Use your child's name.)

Aim of the game

Your baby grabs the rattle as it comes within reach without first looking at his open hand.

Purpose

1. To help your baby connect grasping with seeing.
2. To help connect action with action words.

What else you can do

1. Use other objects to get your baby to grasp. For example, use the baby bottle, your hand, or a small doll.
2. Similar games: Series One – 9.

I Can Move to Keep Things in Sight

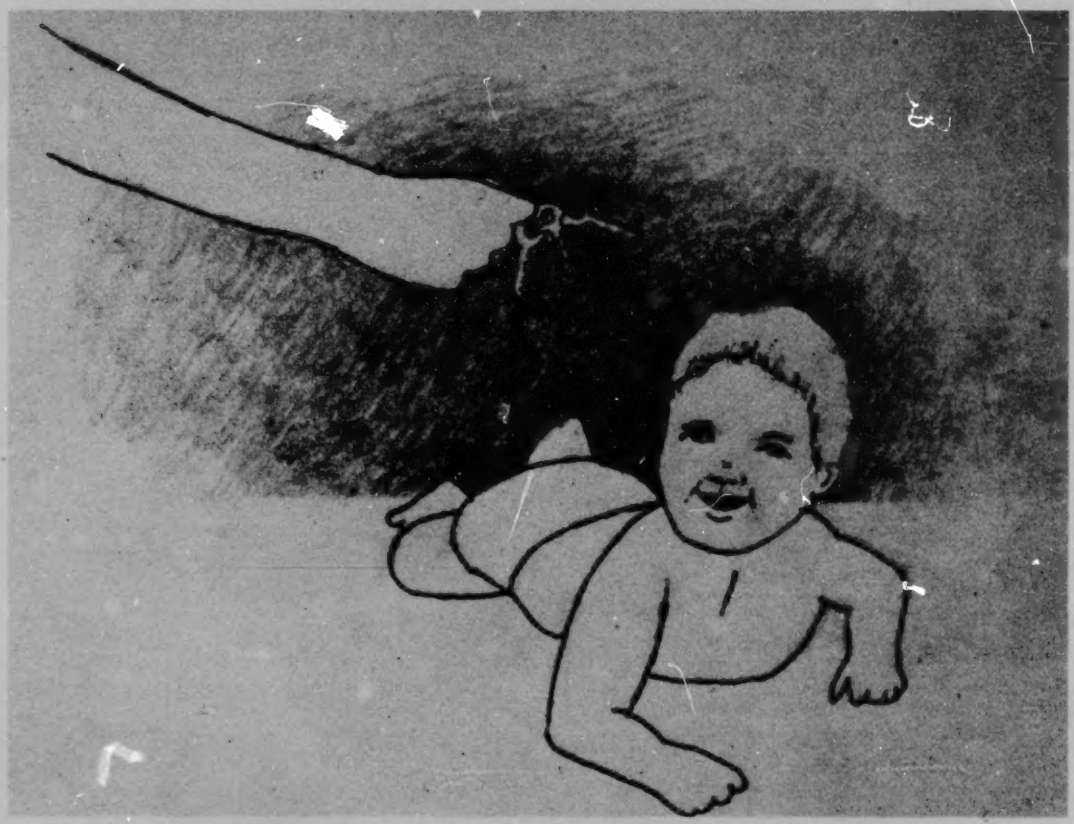
Eyes-and-body game

Position

Baby's position: lying on stomach.
Your position: facing the baby, with your hand on the baby's bottom.

Action

1. Use something like keys or a can filled with rocks for this game. Dangle the noise-making object directly in front of your baby's face and say, "Look at the keys."
2. Raise the object slowly in the air, encouraging the baby to lift her head and push up with her hands. Say something like, "Follow the keys. Keep your eyes on the keys."
3. Watch the baby's hands and chest. Can your baby lift her chest off the floor?



Aim of the game

Your baby lifts her head and part of her upper body trying to follow the object with her eyes.

Purpose

To help your baby discover the use of her body to help her eyes follow an object.

What else you can do

1. Move objects slowly behind your baby's head. See if the baby will move around to find the object.
2. Similar game: Series Two – 4.

Learning Familiar Rhythms and Sounds

Communication game

Position

Baby's position: sitting on your lap.
Your position: holding the baby on your lap, facing you.

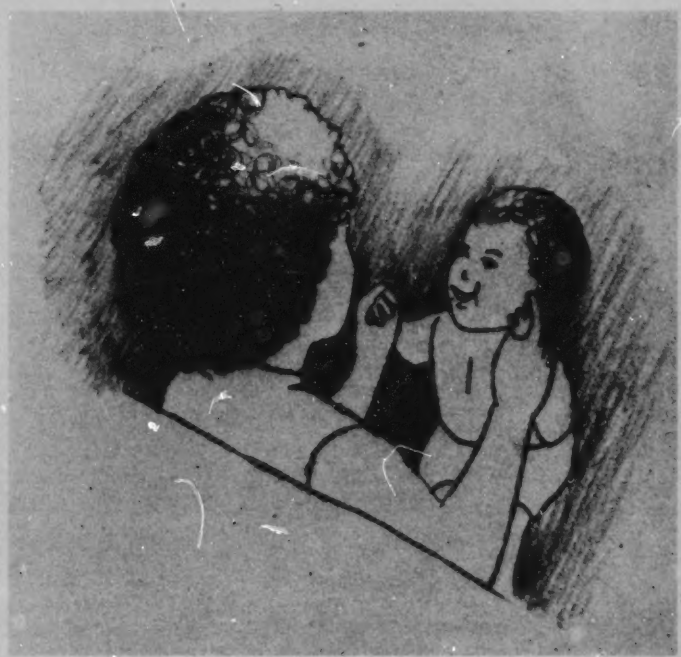
Action

Take your baby's hands in yours. While you sing, make the motions of the song with your baby's hands.

The song goes:

"Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man,
Bake me a cake as fast as you can.
Roll 'em and roll 'em and mark 'em with a *B*.
And toss 'em in the oven for baby and me!"

Note: It is important to play the same rhythm game many times so your baby can learn to expect the next step. Your baby will begin to move to the rhythm. This shows your baby is expecting the next step.



Aim of the game

Your baby shows by his body, voice, or smile that the game is fun. Your baby wants to do it again.

Purpose

To help your baby feel rhythm in the use of his arm muscles and body movements.

What else you can do

Any nursery rhymes or songs in which the body is used for rhythm.

Stretch

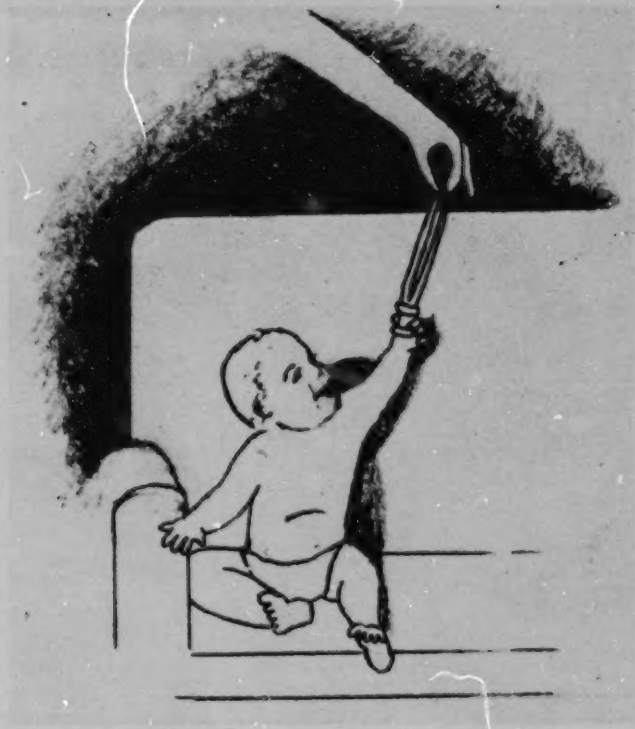
Eyes-and-hands game

Position

Baby's position: propped up in a sitting position or lying on back.
Your position: facing the baby.

Action

1. Put your finger through an elastic loop that has been threaded through a spool and knotted. Encourage your baby to grab the spool by saying, "Mary, get the spool." (Use your child's name.)
2. When your baby grabs the spool, pull on it gently. Say, "Pull on it."
3. After your baby has pulled on the spool for a while, let her get it.



Aim of the game

Your baby reaches for and grabs the spool, holding on long enough to pull it.

Purpose

1. To give your baby the feeling of pulling against something that has spring to it.
2. To help your baby get all parts of her body working together.

What else you can do

1. Use your index fingers. Have your baby grasp your fingers. Pull your baby up to a standing position.
2. See if you can lift your baby off the ground by using only the strength of the baby's grasp on your fingers.

Series Two

Age: about 4 to 8 months

Series Two games are planned for infants from about 4 to 8 months of age. You will see that infants are expected to do more in these games. At this age, infants are beginning to use their bodies to explore. They have better control over their voices, hands, eyes, and bodies. They begin to use this control.

In Series Two, you will find more of the three kinds of games used in Series One. One new kind of game is added. This kind of game teaches the infant that things don't disappear.

The *Things-don't-disappear games* may surprise you. You will begin to see how your infant thinks differently from adults. Infants think that things out of sight have disappeared.

The disappearing game will help your child understand that things, including you, are permanent. Your child will learn you are always there, somewhere. Your child needs the safe feeling of knowing you are there. Your infant will learn you are there even when you can't be seen.

Knowing that things don't disappear will help your child's future learning. It will show your child that things out of sight can be found. Your infant's world will begin to make sense. It will no longer be a world full of things that appear, then disappear. Your child will learn that things come and go with a certain order. It's a world in which your child can often tell what will happen. For example, if you hide behind a door, you will still be you. When you come out, you won't be a duck. Your infant learns to expect the same you to come out.

Remember that your baby is learning more than the games. Your child also learns about who you are while you play together. Even at this early age, your infant is beginning to learn:

- to trust or not trust you
- to be relaxed or tense around you
- to enjoy or not enjoy doing things with you.

Difficult Sounds

Communication game

Position

Your position: holding the baby in your arms.

Action

1. When your baby is relaxed and happy, say some sounds he is not used to. Try sounds like *brr-own, grrr-ate, bzzz-y,* or other sounds. Examples: *uh-oh, aaa-all gone.*
2. Face your baby when talking so that he can watch your lips. Nuzzle or cuddle the baby after you make the sounds.
3. Pause and give the baby time to make sounds. *Remember,* give your baby a chance to make the sounds.
4. When your baby makes sounds, laugh, smile, or nuzzle him happily.
5. Try to make this and other communication games a time you both enjoy.
6. See if your baby tries to copy your sounds. Does the baby try?

Aim of the game

Your baby makes sounds like yours.

Purpose

To help your baby try to make speech-like sounds.

What else you can do

Any sound or word imitation games played face to face with your baby.

Little Piggy

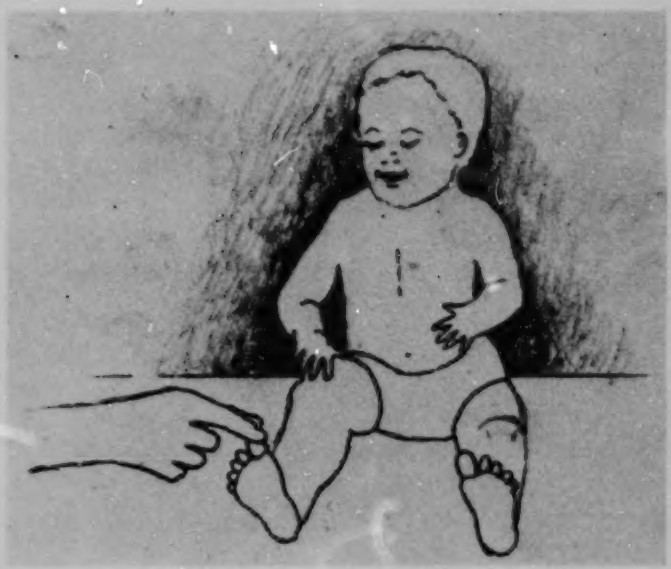
Communication game

Position

Baby's position: propped in a sitting position or lying on back.
Your position: facing the baby or holding her on your lap.

Action

1. Hold your baby's big toe between your thumb and index finger and say, "This little piggy went to market."
2. Hold the baby's second toe and say, "This little piggy stayed home."
3. Hold the baby's next toe and say, "This little piggy had roast beef."
4. Hold the baby's next toe and say, "This little piggy had none."
5. Hold the baby's little toe and say, "And this little piggy cried wee, wee, wee, all the way home."



Aim of the game

Your baby shows enjoyment.

Purpose

1. To help your baby get to know different parts of her body.
2. To help your baby become interested in playing games with others.

What else you can do

1. Any song or word games that bring you and your baby together to teach each other and to play with each other.
2. Similar games: Series One – 8; Series Four – 5; Series Five – 3; Series Six – 7.

Hiding a Part

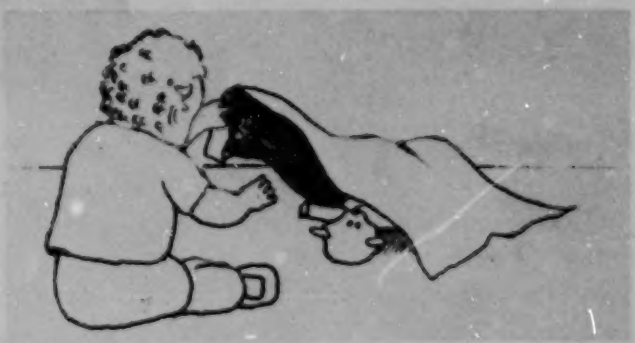
Things-don't-disappear game

Position

Baby's position: sitting with a flat surface in front of him.
Your position: beside and supporting the baby.

Action

1. Hold a favorite toy out to your baby.
2. When your baby reaches for it, place the toy in front of the baby and cover it quickly. Leave a little of the toy showing.
3. Say, "Where is the toy? Find the toy."



Aim of the game

Your baby gets the toy when it is partly covered.

Purpose

To help your baby realize that things don't disappear.

What else you can do

1. Cover the toy completely and see if your child can find it.
2. Similar games: Series Three – 2,6; Series Four – 2,4,7.

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Turn to See

Eyes-and-ears game

Position

Baby's position: propped with pillows in a big chair.
Your position: standing out of sight behind the baby.

Action

1. Hold a bell or other noise-making object in your right hand and ring it, but not so loudly that it scares your baby. Say something like, "Find the bell."
2. Hold the noise-making object in your left hand and ring it on the other side of your baby's head and say, "Now, find the bell."

Aim of the game

Your baby turns her body toward the noise-making object.

Purpose

To help your baby learn to move as an aid in finding objects she hears.

What else you can do

Similar games: Series One – 5,7; Series Eight – 6.

Name Game

Communication game

Position

Baby's position: on your lap.
Your position: sitting, holding a magazine, with the baby on your lap.

Action

1. Point out and name at least 10 objects pictured in a magazine.
2. When you point to the object say, "See the car. Look at the dog." In this way, name the objects you point to.
3. Sometimes, while you are pointing, ask your baby, "What is that?" Wait a few seconds and then say something like, "That's a car!"

Note: You may often use questions and explanations while playing with children that they cannot understand at an adult level. Your baby can hear the differences in the sounds of your voice when different actions are expected. This helps your child begin to become aware of language. We do not expect the infant to understand all the words you use.

Aim of the game

Your baby makes similar sounds after you name the objects.

Purpose

To help your baby learn that everything has a name.

What else you can do

Similar games: Series Two – 7; Series Three – 1; Series Four – 1,8; Series Five – 2; Series Six – 2,4,5,6; Series Seven – 2,3,8; Series Eight – 1,4.

The Mirror

Eyes-and-hands game

Position

Baby's position: sitting on your lap.
Your position: sitting on a chair or on the floor. You and the baby should be facing the same direction.

Action

1. Gather objects from around the room that you can show to your baby in a mirror.
2. Hold the mirror so that your baby can see his reflection. Point to the reflection and say, "I see Johnny." (Use your child's name.)
3. Then say, "Where is Johnny? Find Johnny. Look at Johnny."
4. Pick up the objects, one at a time, and move them behind the baby's head. Let the baby see himself and the objects in the mirror. Name the objects. Tell your baby something about the objects, such as, "This is a ball, and it's round."
5. Then say, "Where's the ball?" and so on.

Aim of the game

1. Your baby smiles and reaches for himself in the mirror.
2. Your baby watches the objects in the mirror and in your hand.

Purpose

1. To help your baby become aware of his own appearance.
2. To give your baby first experiences in seeing objects with their reflections.

What else you can do

1. Have people your baby knows sit in front of a large mirror. Say the names of the people.
2. Let your child play with toys in front of a wall or dresser mirror.

Forming Categories

Using-the-senses game

Position

Any relaxed position.

Action

See how many different *feels* you can show your baby.

a. Give your baby something hard. Say something like, "This stone is hard. Pat it."
b. Give your baby something soft. Say, "This pillow is soft. Poke it. Squash it."
c. Give your baby something square. Say, "This box is square." Run the baby's fingers around the corners.
d. Give your baby something fuzzy. Say, "This cat is fuzzy." If he rubs it on his cheek, say, "It feels good. It feels fuzzy."

Aim of the game

Your baby reaches for and feels or pats the objects while listening to your voice.

Purpose

To help your baby realize that objects like balls and rocks have names for the way they look and feel (hard, fuzzy, soft).

What else you can do

Similar games: Series One – 3; Series Five – 2; Series Eight – 5.

Series Three

Age: about 6 to 12 months

Infants about 6 to 12 months of age will enjoy Series Three games. This series contains two new areas for your infant to explore.

One area is imitation, copying others. Much of an infant's learning is by imitation. Young children most often imitate those people who care for them each day. That makes you an important teacher for your child.

Imitation games will go on well into life. These early games help the child watch the ways others do things.

Using tools is the second new area in Series Three. The *Using-a-tool games* help the child begin to figure things out without imitating.

The first tools an infant uses are parts of his or her body. The infant then uses objects and people as a means to get what's wanted. Finally, the child uses ideas as tools. Watch your child learn to use more and more advanced tools. You will find that, by two years of age, your child is using ideas as tools.

Names in the Home

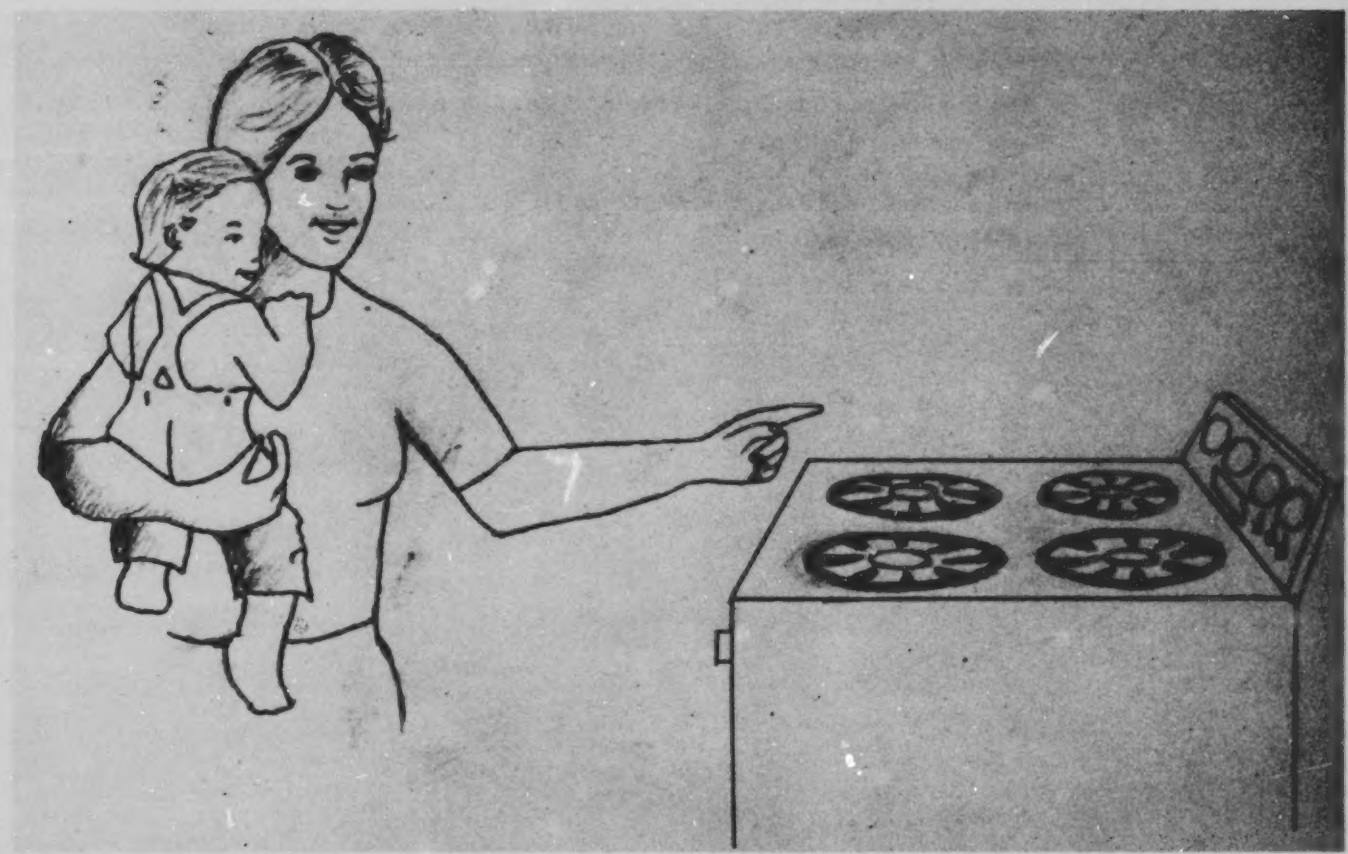
Communication game

Position

Any relaxed position.

Action

1. Show your baby different objects around the room. Name and describe these objects to the baby. Examples: chair, table, bed, stove, refrigerator, lamp, door, window, rug.
2. Ask your baby what the object is. Then repeat the name of the object a few times.



Aim of the game

Your baby makes sounds after you make them.

Purpose

To help your baby learn that everything has a name.

What else you can do

1. Tell your child the name of anything.
2. Similar games: Series Two – 5; Series Four – 1; Series Five – 2; Series Six – 2,5,6; Series Seven – 2; Series Eight – 1.

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Hide in the Box

Things-don't-disappear game

Position

Any relaxed position.

Action

1. While your baby is watching, place one of the baby's favorite objects in a bag, box, or jar in such a way that your baby can't see the object.
2. Ask, "Where is the doll?" Or say, "Take the doll out of the box."

Aim of the game

Your baby takes the doll out of the box, bag, or jar.

Purpose

To help your child understand that objects don't disappear.

What else you can do

1. Use two boxes but hide the toy in only one. Let your child see you hide the toy.
2. Similar games: Series Two – 3; Series Three – 6; Series Four – 2,4,7.

Building and Nesting

Imitation game

Position

Baby's position: sitting on the floor.
Your position: sitting next to the baby.

Action

1. Save three tin cans that will fit one inside the other. Be sure that they do not have sharp edges.
2. Build a pyramid with the largest can upside down for the bottom, and the smallest can on the top. Knock the pyramid down and encourage your baby to imitate your motions.

Aim of the game

Your baby knocks over the pyramid with her hands.

Action

3. Place each smaller can inside the next larger can.
4. Lay the cans on their side and pull the small one out slowly.
5. Try to get your baby to dump the cans out by saying, "Take the cans out."

Aim of the game

Your baby dumps the cans out.

Purpose

To help your baby realize through imitation that objects can be used in different ways.

What else you can do

Similar games: Series Four – 3,6; Series Five – 6; Series Seven – 5.

Get What You Want

Using-a-tool game

Position

Baby's position: in a sitting position on your lap or at a table with a flat surface that the baby can get up and crawl on.

Your position: beside or in front of the baby.

Action

1. Place a small blanket within reach of your baby.
2. Put a favorite toy on the blanket but out of reach of the baby.
3. If your baby does not pull the blanket and get the toy that rests on it, push the blanket toward the baby until he gets the toy.
4. As your baby acts, you should use action words which tell the baby what is going on. For example, "See, you got the ball by pulling the blanket."

Aim of the game

Your baby pulls the blanket and grasps the toy.

Purpose

To help your baby use objects as tools for getting what he wants.

What else you can do

1. Use towels, pot holders, pillows, as the tool.
2. Similar games: Series Three – 5,7; Series Five – 8; Series Six – 4; Series Seven – 1.

Pull the Right String

Using-a-tool game

Position

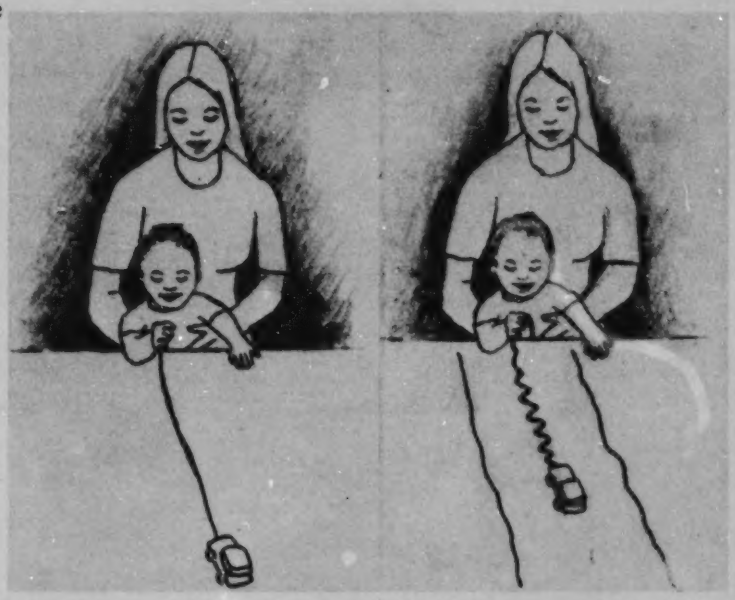
Baby's position: propped in a sitting position on your lap with a flat surface like a table top in front of her.

Action

1. While your baby is watching, tie one end of a string around a favorite toy. Place the toy out of reach, in front of the baby. Say, "Get the toy."

Aim of the game

Your baby pulls the string and gets the the toy.

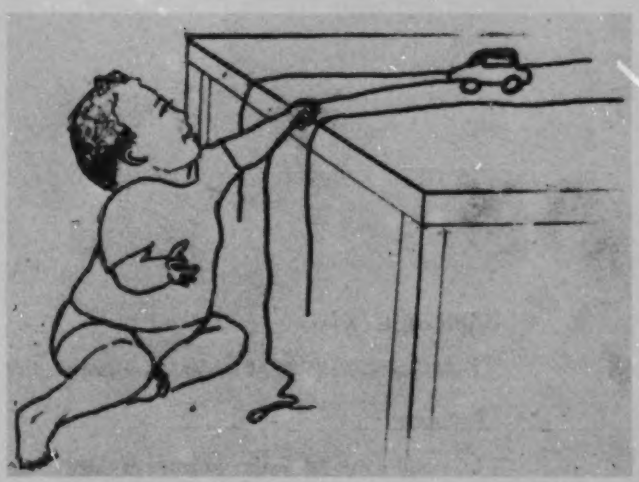


Action

2. Place the toy with the string attached out of reach again. Place two more strings alongside the string with the toy attached.

Aim of the game

Your baby chooses to pull the string with the toy attached.



Action

3. Repeat 1 and 2 above, but have your baby sitting on the floor with the three strings hanging down toward the floor.

Aim of the game

Same as 1 and 2.

Purpose

To help your baby learn to use objects as tools for getting what she wants.

What else you can do

Similar games: Series Three – 4,7; Series Five – 8; Series Six – 4; Series Seven – 1.

The Disappearing Toy

Things-don't-disappear game

Position

Baby's position: in a sitting position on your lap with a flat surface like a table top in front of him.

Action

1. Place a favorite toy away from your baby so that he must reach to get it.
2. Put a piece of cardboard between your baby and the toy.
3. Pull the cardboard back and forth so your baby can see, then not see, the toy.
4. Talk to your baby about what he is doing and point out the different things that are happening. Say something like, "I'm hiding the toy behind the screen. You can't see it now."

Aim of the game

Your baby reaches around the cardboard and gets the toy.

Purpose

To help your baby realize that things don't go away just because they can't be seen.

What else you can do

1. Hold the cardboard between you and the baby; and slowly lower the toy behind it.
2. Similar games: Series Two – 3; Series Three – 2; Series Four – 2,4,7.

Go and Get It

Eyes-and-body game

Position

Any relaxed position.

Action

1. Give an object to your baby and let the baby explore it.
2. Keeping the object in the baby's sight, move it to different places in the room.
3. Do this in different rooms, using objects usually found in each room. Examples: washcloth in the bathroom, shoe in the closet, pan in the kitchen.

Aim of the game

Your baby crawls after and gets the object.

Purpose

To help your baby learn to go after things that interest her.

What else you can do

1. Interest your baby in any object, and move the object across the room. Ask the baby to get it.
2. Similar games: Series One – 7; Series Three – 8; Series Six – 4.

Play Ball

Eyes-and-body game

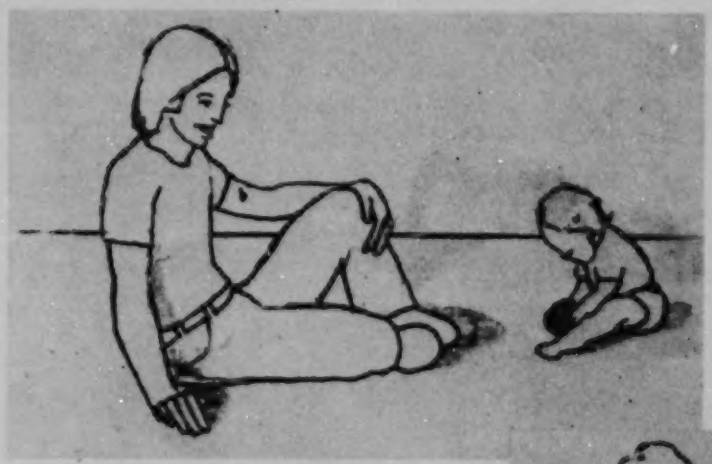
Position

Baby's position: on hands and knees or sitting on the floor.
Your position: facing the baby.

Action

1. Roll a ball toward and away from and to the left and right of your baby.
2. Say, "Look at the ball. Go get the ball."

Note: Use a ball that will hold your baby's interest.



Aim of the game

Your baby moves after the ball to get it.

Purpose

1. To get your baby interested in using crawling for finding out about the size of things in relation to distance.
2. To help your baby learn that the ball does not get small when it moves away.

What else you can do

1. Move things away from and back to your baby while he watches. This helps your baby see that distance affects how big things look, but it doesn't change their size.
2. Have your baby crawl into spaces he can barely fit into, so that he will have to move his body to fit into the space.
3. Similar game: Series Seven – 4.

Series Four

Age: about one year

Series Four games are directed toward children about a year old. By this time, your child might be able to:

- say one or two words
- understand many words you speak
- understand that things don't disappear
- search for things that have gone out of sight.

One-year-olds are interested in movement. This movement puts them in contact with many objects. Earlier, they were curious about these objects. Now they can move toward objects and reach them.

The new learning area in this series is *Reversible games.* These games help the child understand the ins and outs, ups and downs, backs and forths of life. The child begins to learn how things work.

This series should stress independent action. Let your child take the lead once in a while.

Name the Parts

Communication game

Position

Any relaxed position.

Action

1. Point to and name parts of your baby's body, such as arm, eye, nose, mouth, head, neck, ear, foot, toe, and hand.
2. Touch the parts when you say them.
3. Help your baby touch the parts.

Aim of the game

Your baby makes similar sounds to you after you name the object.

Purpose

To help your baby learn the names of the parts of her body.

What else you can do

1. Point to and name the parts of your body, a doll's body.
2. Similar games: Series Two – 1,5; Series Five – 2; Series Six – 2,5,6; Series Seven – 2; Series Eight – 1.

Unwrap to Find

Things-don't-disappear game

Position

Any relaxed position.

Action

1. Wrap your child's favorite toy in a piece of brown paper *while the child is watching.*
2. Give the wrapped toy to your child.
3. Say, "Get the toy out of the paper."

Aim of the game

Your child unwraps the paper and gets the toy.

Purpose

1. To help your child understand that although the toy is out of sight it can be found.
2. To teach your child to use tools (arms and hands) to find things.

What else you can do

1. Hide the toy in something more difficult to take apart.
2. Similar games: Series Two – 3; Series Three – 2,6; Series Four – 4,7.

Fill and Empty

Reversible game

Position

Child's position: sitting on the floor, bed, or sofa.
Your position: next to the child.

Action

1. Give your baby an empty oatmeal box. Show the baby how to fill it with objects from around the room. Show your baby how to empty the box. Say, "See, the box is full. Let's empty the box. See, the box is empty."
2. Repeat the exercise.

Aim of the game

Your baby fills and empties the cereal box.

Purpose

1. To help your baby learn that what can be done can also be undone.
2. To give your baby practice using his small muscles.

What else you can do

1. Covering and uncovering; threading and unthreading; walking to and walking backwards from a position.
2. Similar games: Series Three – 3; Series Four – 6.

The Hidden Transfer

Things-don't-disappear game

Position

Child's position: sitting on the floor.
Your position: facing the baby.

Action

1. While your baby is watching, place a favorite toy in a kitchen pan.
2. Cover the pan containing the toy with a dish towel.
3. Dump the toy out onto the floor, keeping the toy hidden under the towel.
4. Show the empty pan to your baby and observe.

Note: Use a toy that doesn't make noise when it hits the floor.

Aim of the game

Your baby searches under the towel and gets the toy.

Purpose

To help your baby realize that objects don't disappear and that searching will help her find things.

What else you can do

Similar games: Series Two – 3; Series Three – 2,6; Series Four – 2,7.

Beehive

Communication game

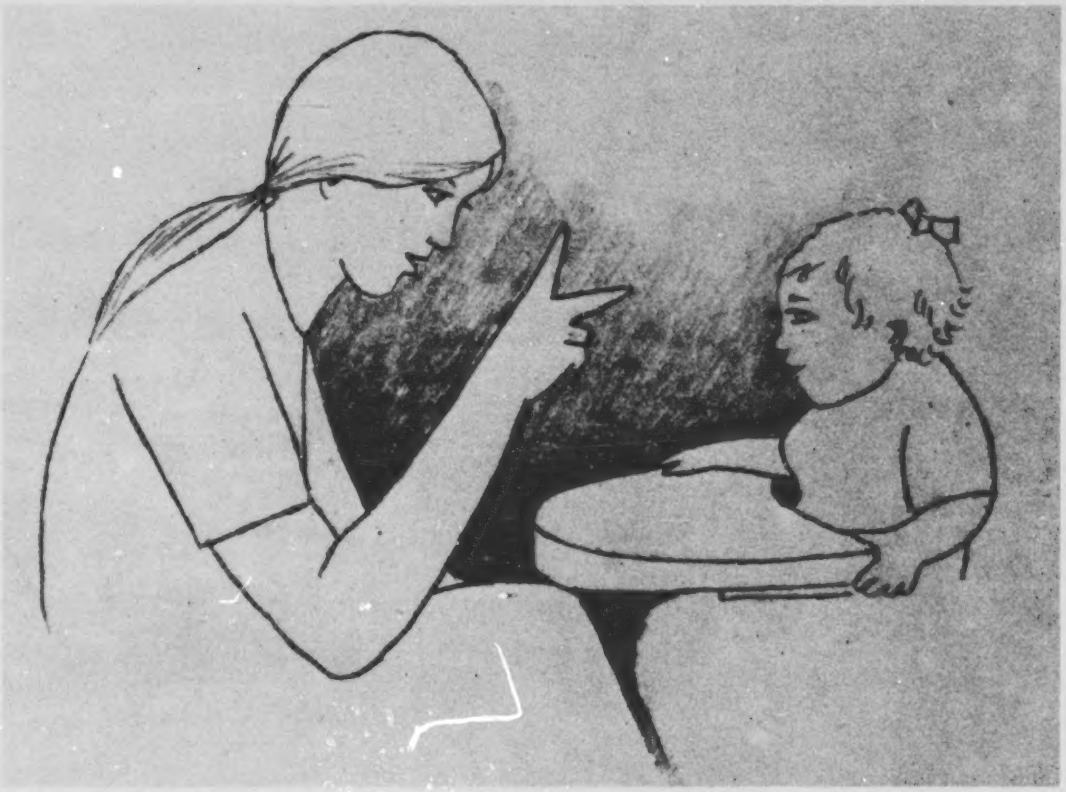
Position

Any relaxed position.

Action

1. Make a fist with your hand, enclosing your thumb in your fingers. This is a beehive. Bring out a finger as you count each bee. Begin with your thumb.
2. Then sing:

"Here is the beehive. Where are the bees?
Hidden away where nobody sees.
Soon they come creeping out of the hive...
one! two! three! four! five!



Aim of the game

Your baby listens to your voice and watches your fingers as you recite the verse.

Purpose

To help your baby enjoy playing games that lead to knowing numbers.

What else you can do

1. You can use other counting games, such as One Potato and One, Two, Buckle My Shoe.
2. Similar games: Series One – 8; Series Five – 3; Series Six – 7; Series Eight – 8.

On and Off

Reversible game

Position

Child's position: sitting on the floor or on the bed.
Your position: sitting on the floor or bed next to the baby.

Action

Give your child a jar to fill with objects. Screw the lid on and off and say, "Let's take the spoons out of the jar. Unscrew the lid."

Aim of the game

Your baby screws the top on and off the jar.

Purpose

1. To help your baby learn that what can be done can also be undone.
2. To give your baby practice using his small muscles.

What else you can do

1. Have your baby put a cork in and out of a bottle or put a plastic top on and off a coffee can.
2. Similar games: Series Three – 3; Series Four – 3.

Hide-and-Seek

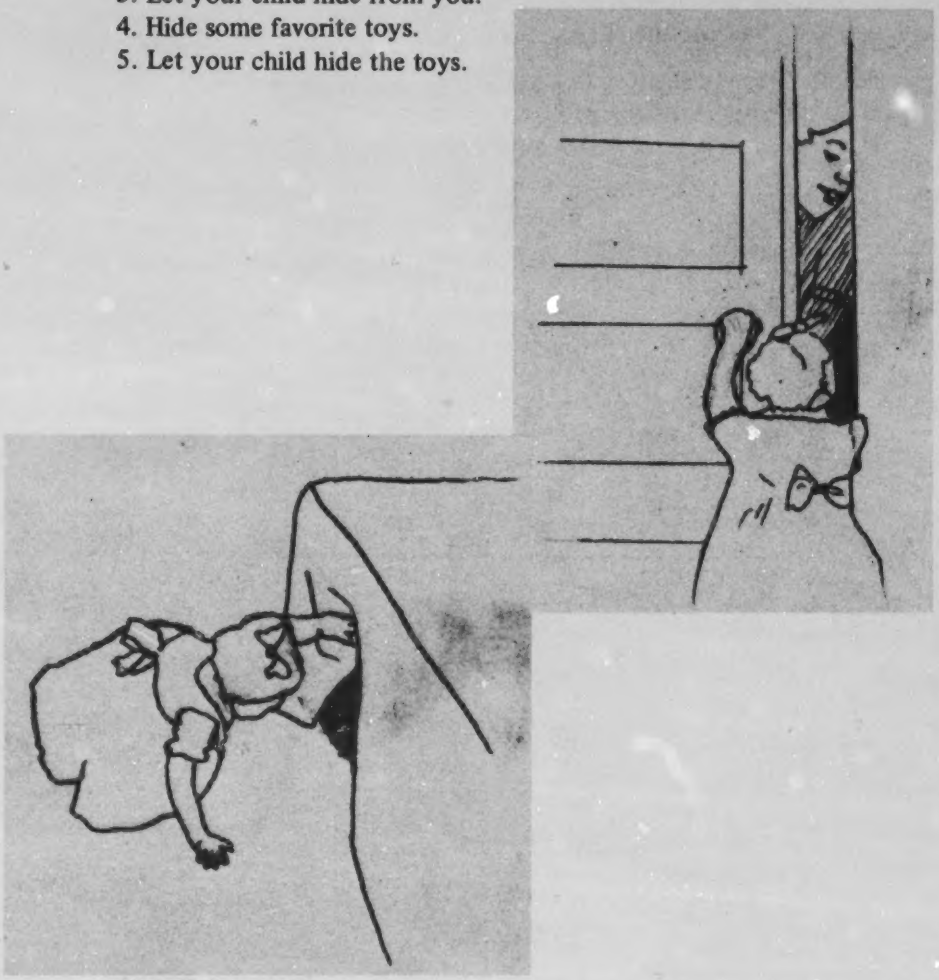
Things-don't-disappear game

Position

Any relaxed position.

Action

1. Play Hide-and-Seek with your child.
2. Hide from your child. Let the child find you.
3. Let your child hide from you.
4. Hide some favorite toys.
5. Let your child hide the toys.



Aim of the game

Your child finds the hidden person or toy.

Purpose

1. To get your child to explore different places.
2. To encourage a good feeling toward discovery.

What else you can do

Similar games: Series Two – 3; Series Three – 2,6; Series Four – 2,4.

Early Reading

Communication game

Position

Child's position: sitting on your lap.

Action

1. Read a picture story book to your child.
2. Let your child point to pictures. Talk about the pictures. Say something like, "This is a boat." Always speak in sentences.
3. Finish the story. Ask if your child would like to hear it again.

Note: Play this game often. Try to make sure that you are not testing your child. Explain pictures in the book in an enjoyable way.

Aim of the game

Your child listens to the story and shows interest in hearing it read.

Purpose

To help your child listen with interest and get used to books.

What else you can do

Similar games: Series Six – 5,8; Series Seven – 2.

Series Five

Age: about 10 to 14 months

Series Five games are for the child from 10 to 14 months of age. In this series, we begin a kind of game that demands more thinking.

The *Learn-a-clue game* in Game 9 is the first of these thinking games. In this game, your child has to guess what plan you are using. The child does this by figuring out the way you use the playthings. For example, your child figures out that the hidden object is always under the *little* can. He or she learns that your plan is always to use the little can.

Try to make up some clue games less difficult than Game 9. Remember, you want your child to be able to tell what your next move will be. Create a game that will help your child do this.

Another learning area is important for chilđen at this age. These children should be learning the meaning of words. Use any game which shows that your child understands words. We encourage you to create your own word games. For example, use questions like "Where's the cup?" Your child will enjoy pointing to things he or she knows. And this shows you that the child knows the meaning of the words for those things.

Scribble

Eyes-and-hands game

Position

Child's position: sitting at a table or on the floor.
Your position: sitting at a table or on the floor close to the child.

Action

1. Place a piece of paper on the table or floor. Give your child a large pencil with a soft lead, or a crayon.
2. If your child does not scribble, take the pencil and scribble on the paper.
3. Give the pencil to your child.

Aim of the game

Your child scribbles on the paper without help.

Purpose

1. To help your child gain skills that will be used in later writing.
2. To help your child make an early connection between paper and pencil or crayon.

What else you can do

1. Finger painting.
2. Painting with brushes.
3. Coloring.
4. Making shapes (more advanced): circles, squares, and so on.
5. Similar game: Series Six – 1.

A Walk Outside

Communication game

Position

Any relaxed position.

Action

1. Say to your child, "Do you want to take a walk?"
2. Walk around outside of the house.

Note: When you take the walk, you should encourage your child to do things that can't be done in the house. Examples: "Let's touch the tree. See how it feels? Let's feel the sand. See the bird."

Do this when you have some time, so that you can enjoy it yourself.

Aim of the game

Your child shows understanding when you say, "Do you want to take a walk?" or "Let's touch the tree," and so on.

Purpose

To help your child understand how words you say connect with things that will happen.

What else you can do

Make any statements that will move a child to actions which show understanding. Examples: "Get the ball. Please touch my nose."

Pop Goes the Weasel

Communication game

Position

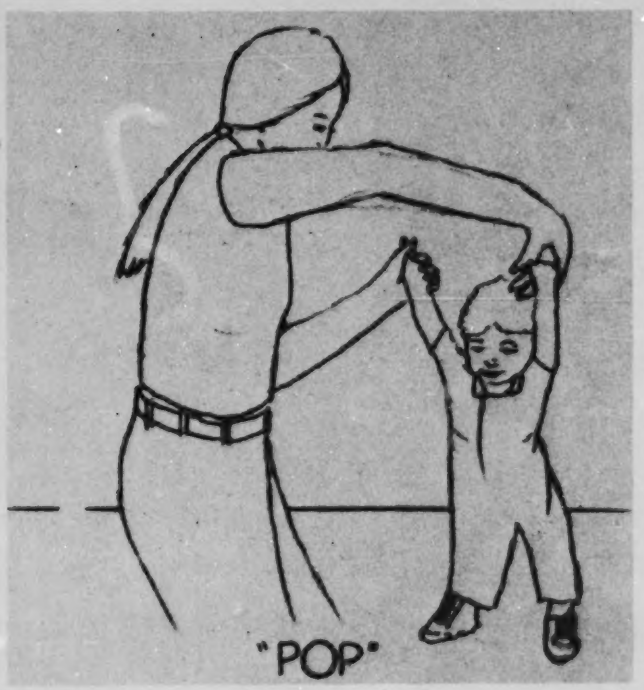
Child's position: sitting on a low chair or on the floor.
Your position: facing the child.

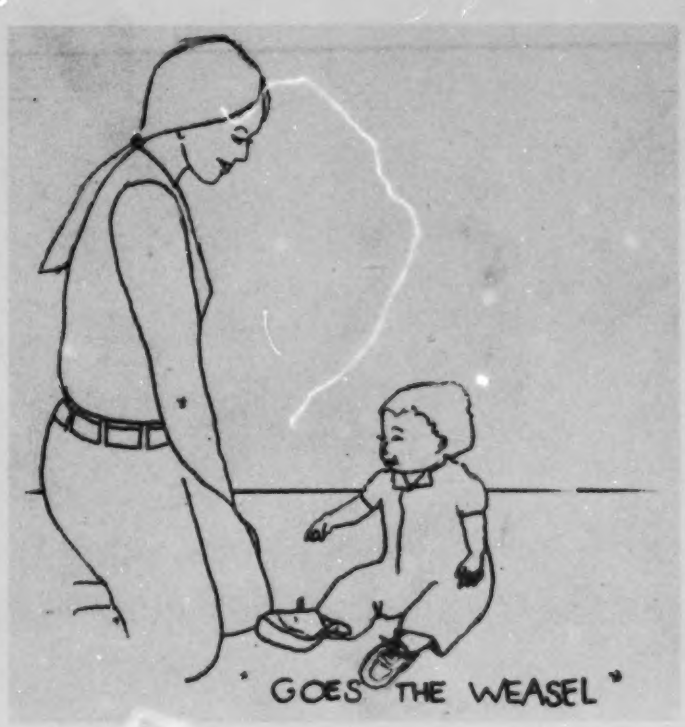
Action

Sing to your child:

"All around the carpenter's bench
The monkey chased the weasel,
The monkey thought 'twas all in fun!
POP, goes the weasel.

As you sing *POP*, take your child's hands and pull the child up. Then sit your child back down as you complete *goes the weasel.*





Aim of the game

Your child listens for the *POP* and jumps up without help when she hears it.

Purpose

To help your child listen for a special signal and act on it.

What else you can do

1. Play Red Light Stop–Green Light Go.
2. Similar games: Series Six – 7; Series Eight – 8.

Button in the Slot

Eyes-and-hands game

Position

Child's position: sitting on the floor or at a table.
Your position: sitting next to the child.

Action

1. Place a small container on the floor. Have a hole (like a piggy bank hole) in its lid.
2. Drop buttons (or pennies) through the slot while your child is watching. Say, "Watch the buttons go in. See how I do it."
3. Empty the jar and put the lid back on.
4. Put the jar and buttons in front of your child.
5. If your child does not put any buttons in the jar, put some in and say, "Let's put the buttons in the jar."
6. Empty the jar and let your child try again.

Note: Don't make the slot too small. It should be easy for the buttons to go in the slot.

Aim of the game

Your child puts buttons through the slot by himself.

Purpose

To help your child gain skills in using his small muscles.

What else you can do

1. Drop dried beans in a small-neck bottle.
2. Similar games: Series Four – 3,6; Series Five – 7; Series Seven – 4,7; Series Eight – 2.

Which Hand Is It In?

Things-don't-disappear game

Position

Any relaxed position.

Action

1. Hold a small object in one of your hands.
2. Show your child the object. Switch it back and forth between your hands several times.
3. Show both hands closed and say, "Which hand is it in?"
4. When your child reaches for one of your hands, say either (a) or (b) below:
   (a) "No. It's not in this hand." Quickly open your hand. "This hand is empty. Where is it?"
   (b) "Yes. It is in this hand." Then quickly open your hand.

Aim of the game

Your child reaches for one hand or the other. The child shows by action or expression that she understands your *no* or *yes* response before you open your hand.

Purpose

To help your child learn that information can come from words. Example: *No* doesn't always mean *don't.*

What else you can do

1. Hide a toy under towels.
2. Hide a ball under one of many cups.

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Building a Tower

imitation game

Position

Child's position: sitting on the floor or at a table.
Your position: next to the child.

Action

1. Place blocks in a pile in front of you and your child.
2. Build a tower with 2 or 3 of the blocks.
3. Don't *knock* down the tower. *Take* it down.
4. Ask your child to make another tower.
5. If your child doesn't start to make a tower, hand the child a block and say, "See, we can put one on top of another."
6. When your child puts one block on top of another, say, "You can do it."

Note: If the tower falls, don't make a big thing out of it.

Aim of the game

Your child builds a tower by himself.

Purpose

To help your child understand that objects can be combined to make other objects.

What else you can do

1. Have your child build with cans, boxes, and other similar objects. Have him build designs by imitating what you do. Examples: pryamid, train, two towers together.
2. Similar games: Series Three –3; Series Six –1: Series Seven –5.

Finding a Toy

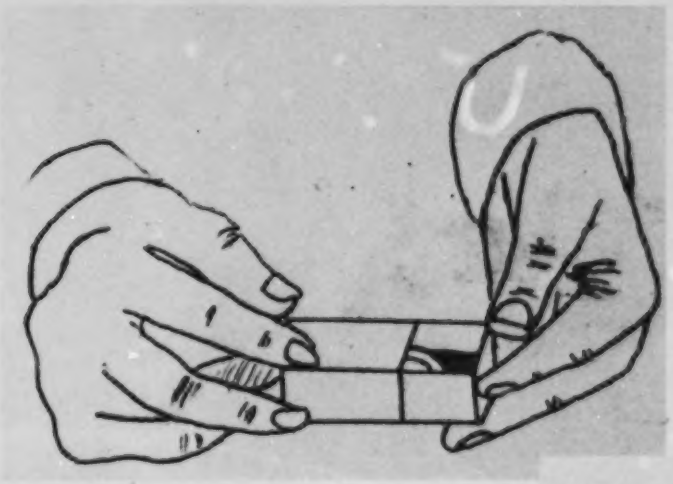
Eyes-and-hands game

Position

Any relaxed position.

Action

1. Place something of interest to your child (a marble, a piece of candy, or a button) inside a match box. Give it to your child and say something like, "Get the marble out of the box."
2. If your child can't get the object, open the box slightly and say, "Now try to get the marble."
3. If your child still can't get the object, open and close the box in front of the child a few times.



Aim of the game

Your child gets the object out of the box.

Purpose

To help your child learn a new way to get what she wants.

What else you can do

1. Put something in a drawer, in a can with a lid, in a bread box.
2. Similar games: Series Five – 1,4; Series Six – 8; Series Seven – 7.

It's Always in the Same Place

Learn-a-clue game

Position

Any relaxed position.

Action

1. Put one of your child's favorite toys under one of three different-sized tin cans that have been placed in a line.
2. Don't let your child see which can you hide the toy under.
3. Ask your child to get the toy.
4. Change the cans around, but *keep the toy in the same spot.*
5. Keep repeating the game. Show your child where the toy is if he can't find it.

Aim of the game

Your child removes the can that the toy is under and gets the toy at least three times in a row.

Purpose

To help your child learn to figure out your plan.

What else you can do

1. Use objects of different colors, or shapes. Always hide the toy under the same color or shape.
2. Similar game: Series Seven – 1.

Series Six

Age: about 12 to 16 months

You will discover two new learning areas in Series Six:
– *Grouping games*
– *Cause-it-to-happen games.*

The *Grouping games* are very important. They help the child to sort out things in the world. The child learns that some things belong together and some do not. These games help your child put things together that belong together.

Grouping games follow the early *Sense games.* The *Sense games* helped the child understand the ideas of same and different. To play *Grouping games,* children must have an understanding of *same* and *different.*

Later, the child will learn that the same object can fit in several groups. A red ball, for example, could be grouped with balls or red things. It could also be grouped with bouncing things or round things. For now, we want to see if the child can sort out things. We want the child to sort out one group of objects from another.

The *Cause-it-to-happen games* help the child understand what causes things to happen. How do you start things? with a key? with a push? with a bang on the table? During this series, let the child explore how and why things work.

Draw a Line

Imitation game

Position

Any relaxed position.

Action

1. Make a line on a piece of paper with a crayon or a large pencil.
2. Say to your child, "Draw a line like mine."
3. After your child has drawn a line, compare the lines. Let the child keep working with the crayon and paper. Comment on lines that look like your line. Let the child compare lines.

Note: The easiest line to make is up and down toward the body.

Aim of the game

To get your child to make a mark like the one you make.

Purpose

To help your child gain skills needed in writing.

What else you can do

1. Have your child imitate different shapes, horizontal lines, number of lines, lines of different lengths.
2. Similar game: Series Five – 1.

Body Parts

Communication game

Position

Any relaxed position.

Action

1. Name and point to different parts of your body.
2. Ask your child to point to different parts of your body and the child's body.
   For example: "Where is my nose? Where is your nose?"

Aim of the game

Your child points to three different parts of her body.

Purpose

1. To help your child to learn the different parts of the body.
2. To show you the words that your child knows.

What else you can do

Similar games: Series Two – 5,7; Series Three – 1; Series Four – 1,8;
Series Six – 4,5,6; Series Seven – 2,3,8; Series Eight – 1,4.

Caps and Stones

Grouping games

Position

Child's position: sitting on the floor.
Your position: out of the child's sight, watching.

Action

1. Place four small stones and four bottle caps in front of your child as shown in the box below.
2. Let your child play with the caps and stones without any direction.
3. Say, "Look, Jim, these can go together because they look alike. So can those. See, these are stones. They are round. These are caps. They come off bottles and have sharp edges." (Use your child's name.)
4. Set the caps and stones up again and watch what your child does.

Aim of the game

Your child separates objects into correct piles.

Purpose

To help your child learn about the things that are the same and the things that are different in objects.

What else you can do

1. Put down twigs and staws. Ask your child to put them in piles.
2. Be sure that there are different kinds of objects around for play at other times. If you see your child putting a group together, point out the groups and name the grouping.
3. Similar games: Series One – 3; Series Eight – 3.

Get What is Asked For

Communication game

Position

Child's position: in a crawling position on the floor.
Your position: behind the child.

Action

1. Place different items across the room (spoon, hairbrush, doll). These should be objects the child knows well.
2. Tell your child, "Go get the spoon. Give me the spoon."
3. When your child brings the object say, "Thank you for the spoon. Very good. Now, bring me the brush," and so on.

Aim of the game

Your child gets the object you ask for.

Purpose

1. To help your child recognize different objects and connect the object's name with its appearance.
2. To help your child learn the names of actions like *give* and *get*.

What else you can do

Similar games: Series Eight – 1,5,6.

More Early Reading

Communication game

Position

The child is sitting on your lap.

Action

1. Read a picture story book to your child.
2. Let your child look at the pictures as you read.
3. Say to your child, "Where is the rabbit? Find the bird. What is the boy doing? Is he playing with his car?"
4. Finish the story.

Aim of the game

Your child points to three of the objects you name.

Purpose

Your child listens to the story and learns the names of different objects and people from the book.

What else you can do

Similar games: Series Two – 5; Series Four – 8; Series Six – 8; Series Seven – 2.

Where Are They?

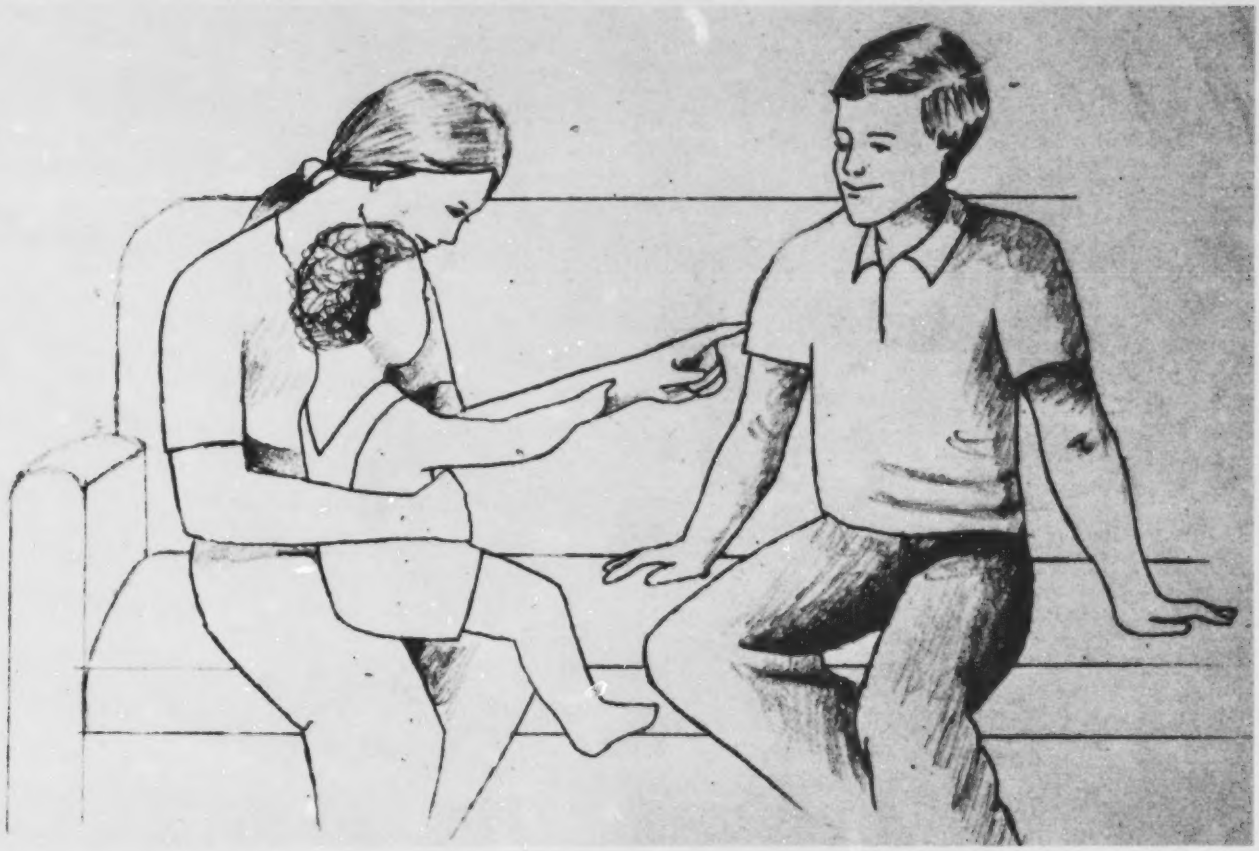
Communication game

Position

Any relaxed position.

Action

1. Ask your child questions and talk about things that help the child identify himself, members of your family, and others.
2. Say, "Where is Daddy? Point to Daddy." (point to Daddy.)
   "Where is Johnny? Point to Johnny. There's Johnny." (Point to Johnny.)
   "Where is Suzy? You're Suzy." (Point to her.)



Aim of the game

Your child points to or goes to the person named.

Purpose

To help your child increase her language skills and know the names of people important to her.

What else you can do

Similar games: Series Two – 5; Series Three – 1; Series Four – 1; Series Five – 2; Series Six – 5,8; Series Seven – 2; Series Eight – 1.

Row Your Boat

Cause-it-to-happen game

Position

Child's position: sitting or standing on your lap or on the sofa.
Your position: facing the child.

Action

1. Take your child's hands in yours and sing "Row Your Boat."
   (The music goes slow, faster, faster, slow.)
2. Move your child's hands and arms in a back-and-forth rowing motion.

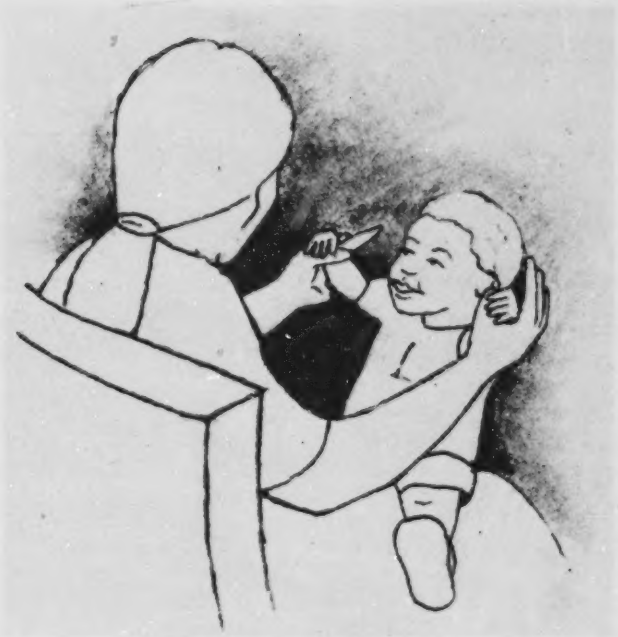
The song goes:

"Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream;
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily;
Life is but a dream."

3. Stop in the middle of the song and observe your child.

Note: Don't always stop. Usually, sing the song to its end.

4. Start again after your child makes some motion.



Aim of the game

Your child makes his hands and arms move to start you singing and moving again.

Purpose

To help your child practice causing things to happen.

What else you can do

Wind up a music box, toy car, jack-in-the-box. Let your child try to start it.

Reading Alone

Communication game

Position

Child's position: on the floor, at the table, or on the sofa.

Action

1. Ask your child, "Do you want to read a magazine?"
2. If yes, turn the pages a few times and point to some items.
3. Let your child look at the magazine alone.

Aim of the game

Your child turns the pages alone and looks at the pictures.

Purpose

To help your child get to know magazines as things to read.

What else you can do

Similar games: Series Two – 5; Series Three – 1; Series Four – 1; Series Five – 2; Series Six – 5,6; Series Seven – 2; Series Eight – 1.

Series Seven

Age: about 14 to 20 months

The games in Series Seven are for children 14 to 20 months of age.

Space games are introduced in this series. But they could have come earlier. *Space games* help the child understand about:

- distance and size
- what will fit into what
- the difference between liquids and solids
- how to deal with barriers and heights.

You can create many space games. These games should help the child understand:

- that things don't get smaller when they move away from you
- what a body can and cannot fit in or under
- how shape is changed.

Space games help the child learn the beginning rules of physics. These rules are needed in everyday life. They tell how different things work. You will see a toddler doing physics experiments as your child explores:

dropping
pouring
filling
emptying
splashing
bumping
designing
fitting...

It's Always Under the Same Can

Learn-a-clue game

Position

Any relaxed position.

Action

1. Tell your child to turn around and not to peek.
2. Put a toy under one of three different-sized tin cans.
3. Ask your child to guess which can it is under.
4. Change the position of the cans but *always put the toy under the same can.*
5. When your child guesses the right can, say, "Good! Let's try it a few more times to see if you know where the toy is always hidden."

Aim of the game

Your child picks the can that the toy is under three times in a row.

Purpose

To help your child learn to use clues (size, shape, and so on) to make decisions.

What else you can do

1. Hide toys under objects of different colors or shapes.
2. Similar game: Series Five – 8.

Touch a Word

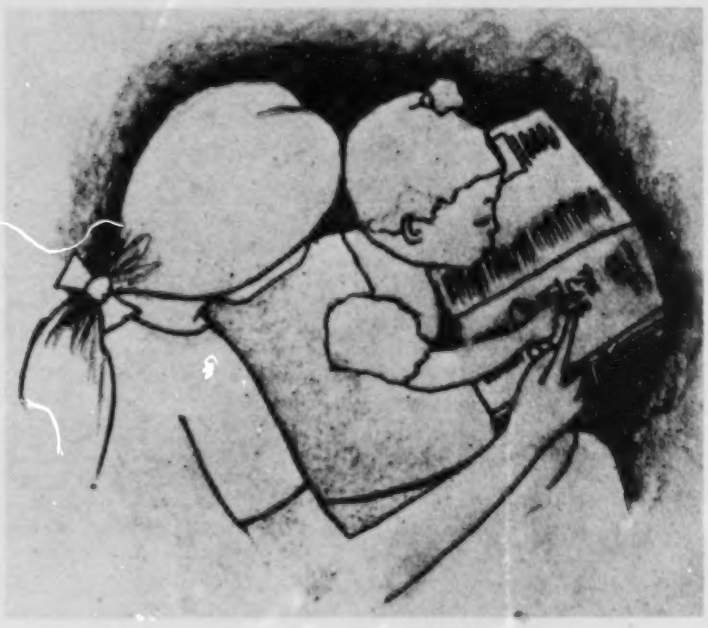
Communication game

Position

You and the child are sitting together.

Action

1. Turn pages in a baby's picture book and say to your child, "Where's the car? Touch the horsey," and so on.
2. Then say, "Now, look at this. This is the word for a car." Point to the word and then say, "Point to the car. Touch the word for car."



Aim of the game

Your child points to the object named and the word for the object.

Purpose

To help your child learn the words for different objects in magazines and books.

What else you can do

Similar games: Series Two – 5; Series Three – 1; Series Four – 1; Series Five – 2; Series Six – 5,6,8; Series Eight – 1.

Sounds Things Make

Communication game

Position

Any relaxed position.

Action

1. Imitate sounds for your child. Use your body to show the action of the imitated object. "A jet goes zoom. A duck goes quack. A fire engine goes ding, ding, ding. A train goes choo, choo, choo. A dog goes wuff, wuff."
2. After each sound you make, ask the child, "How does a jet go?" and so on.
3. Use a picture or model of the objects when you play this game.

Aim of the game

Your child imitates two of the sounds you make.

Purpose

1. To help your child pronounce difficult sounds.
2. To help your child connect sounds with the objects that make them.

What else you can do

1. Have your child say the name of actions such as running, sitting, jumping, sleeping, smiling, and so on.
2. Similar games: Series One – 1; Series Two – 1,5; Series Four – 1; Series Eight – 6.

The Shape of Things

Space game

Position

Child's position: sitting on the floor or at a table.
Your position: facing the child.

Action

1. Cut and remove forms (circle, triangle, square) from sheets of cardboard. Put the sheets on the floor in front of your child one at a time.
2. Let your child play with them.
3. Hand all the cut-out parts to your child and say, "Put the circle in the circle hole. Put the square in the square hole."
4. If your child doesn't put the parts in without help, show her how the cut-out parts can be replaced in the sheets they came from.
5. Remove some of the forms if the number of pieces seems to confuse your child.

Aim of the game

Your child puts the cut-out forms in the correct sheets.

Purpose

1. To help your child notice and match simple forms.
2. To help your child see the difference between shapes.

What else you can do

1. Use only one form. A perfect circle form is the easiest to use because it has no corners to match to the form sheet.
2. Have your child stack small containers in larger containers of the same shape. Examples: small can in larger can, small box in larger box.

Big and Little

Grouping game

Position

Any relaxed position.

Action

1. Place three large and three small blocks on the floor.
2. Pile the blocks up in different patterns and describe what you are doing. Example: "Now, we'll take a *big* block. Now, we'll put a *little* block on it," and so on.
3. Now, say something like, "Now, we need a big block. Give me the big block."
4. Let your child play with the blocks alone after you have played the game together.

Aim of the game

Your child gives you the three blocks you ask for.

Purpose

To help your child learn about opposites and size.

What else you can do

1. Have your child *act* to show you he can tell the difference between opposites. Examples: large/small, hot/cold, fast/slow, black/white, happy/sad, high/low.
2. Similar games: Series One – 3; Series Two – 7; Series Four – 3; Series Eight – 3.

The Shapes Liquids Take

Space game

Position

Any relaxed position.

Action

1. Fill a pan with water.
2. Take a cup, fill it from the water in the pan. Empty it. Do this while your child is watching.
3. Give your child the cup and say, "Fill the cup. Empty the cup."
4. Let your child play for a while in the water.
5. If your child doesn't fill the cup, help the child dip the cup into the water.
6. After your child has filled and emptied the cup for a while, take a second cup and hold it over the pan. Say to the child, "Pour water in my cup."

Aim of the game

Your child fills the cup you hold over the pan.

Purpose

To acquaint your child with liquids and the way they change shapes and take the shape of the container they are in.

What else you can do

1. Let your child play the above game while taking a bath.
2. Use sawdust, sand, or soapy water for the same activity.
3. Have your child fit clay into containers of different shapes.

Paper Folding

Imitation game

Position

Any relaxed position.

Action

1. Fold a piece of paper a few times in front of your child.
2. Give your child a new sheet of paper. Ask your child to fold it.
3. If your child doesn't fold it, fold your sheet again, step by step. Ask your child to fold as you do.
4. When this is done, repeat 1 and 2.

Aim of the game

Your child folds the piece of paper.

Purpose

To help your child become better at small muscle skills and exact imitation.

What else you can do

1. Play movement games in which your child has to do what you do.
2. Build a tower with different color blocks. Have your child imitate the tower exactly.
3. Similar games: Series Three – 3; Series Five – 6; Series Six – 1.

What the Parts of the Body Do

Communication game

Position

Child's position: sitting on a chair, at a table or on the floor.
Your position: facing the child.

Action

1. Hold a doll on your lap and say to your child, "Let's play a game with the dolly. Watch me. I'm going to keep the dolly from hearing." Put your hands over the doll's ears.
2. Now, say, "I'm going to keep the dolly from seeing." Put your hands over the doll's eyes. Do this for talking, walking, pointing, smelling, and so on.
3. Give the doll to your child and say, "Now, you cover the doll in the right place when I tell you what to do. OK, keep the dolly from smelling. Keep the dolly from seeing," and so on.
4. Repeat for different areas of the body until your child catches on. Then go fast.
5. Make this as much of a game as possible.
6. After a while, ask what your child's hand is over. Your child probably won't respond, so tell her something like, "You have your hand on the dolly's mouth."

Aim of the game

Your child can cover four different parts of the doll's body on request.

Purpose

To help your child get to know the names used for describing what different parts of the body do.

What else you can do

1. Play this game with each other as well as with the doll.
2. Use pictures instead of the doll.
3. Similar games: Series Four – 8; Series Six – 2,6; Series Seven – 2; Series Eight – 1,5.

Series Eight

Age: about 16 to 24 months

Children at this age are almost ready to move on to a new way of thinking. They will begin to figure things out without having to do them. For example, your child will not try to put a big ball in a small can. He or she will begin to know that it won't fit.

Your child will also begin at this time to play many pretend games. The child might use a towel as a blanket or pretend a fuzzy slipper is a dog.

Children at this age hold ideas in their memories longer. They will see something happen in the morning and imitate it in the afternoon.

Series Eight marks the end of a stage of life. Don't try to rush your child through to the next stage. The ways of thinking of the preschool child begin to develop now. But, for a long while, your child's thinking will be based on the ways your child learned in the first two years.

Series Eight has no new learning areas. The games provide more advanced learning in the areas already covered.

Name the Object

Communication game

Position

Any relaxed position.

Action

1. Gather a group of household items together.
2. Hold up an object (dish, belt, towel, and so on) and ask, "What is this?"
3. If your child gives the name for the object, say, "Yes, it is. Good!" If your child doesn't get the right name for the object, say something like, "No, it isn't. This is the *belt*." (Point to the belt.)
4. Now, ask your child what the object is. If your child misses again, say what the object is and ask your child to repeat its name.

Note: This game should be played with objects your child knows well. Change the objects when your child always gives the right answer.

Aim of the game

Your child names three objects.

Purpose

To help your child say the names of objects.

What else you can do

Similar games: Series Two – 5,7; Series Three – 1; Series Four – 1,8; Series Five – 2; Series Six – 2,4,5,6; Series Seven – 2,3,8.

Objects in Order

Learn-a-clue game

Position

Child's position: sitting at a table or on the floor.
Your position: sitting at a table or on the floor across from the child.

Action

1. Show your child a spindle set up with four rings arranged on it by size. Have the largest ring on the bottom, then the next largest, on up to the smallest ring on top.
2. Let your child play with the toy a few minutes.
3. Take the spindle and the rings and let your child watch as you slowly put the rings on the spindle. Say, "See what I can do with the rings. First, I am putting on the big big ring. Now, I am putting on the big ring. Now, I am putting on the little ring." And last: "Now, I am putting on the teeny weeny ring."

   Let your child see the finished spindle.

4. Take the rings off the spindle. Place the rings and the spindle in front of your child and say, "Now, you try it."
5. Help your child by saying, "First, the big big ring." As your child finds the correct ring, say, "Next, the big ring. Next, the little ring. And last, the teeny weeny ring."
6. If your child puts on the wrong ring, take it off and say, for example, "No, show me the big big ring." Help your child find the four correct rings if necessary.
7. Take the rings off. Place the rings and spindle in front of your child and say, "Now, you do it by yourself." *Do not help him.*

Note: Make sure your child has free time to play with the spindle and rings in his own way.

Aim of the game

Your child puts the rings on the spindle in order.

Purpose

1. To help your child learn the difference between objects that are the same, except for size.
2. To help your child learn some of the words used to describe size.
3. To let your child experience that things can be ordered from big to little.

What else you can do

1. Show your child other ways to arrange the rings, both on and off the spindle. Let your child try them. Examples: place the rings on the spindle starting with the small ring first, or arrange the rings in order in a row, not on the spindle.
2. Use five sticks of different lengths and see if your child can put them in order, from big to little. Also use cans, dolls, books, and so on.
3. Similar games: Series Five – 8; Series Seven – 1,5.

Hard and Soft

Grouping game

Position

Child's position: sitting on the floor or at a table.
Your position: next to the child.

Action

1. Place hard and soft objects together in one pile.
2. Ask your child to place the hard objects in one pile and the soft objects in another.
3. If your child cannot do this, take the hard objects and say, "These are hard." Then put them in one pile.
4. Put the objects all back together in one pile and repeat the game.

Aim of the game

Your child sorts the hard objects from the soft objects.

Purpose

To help your child learn to group objects by feel and to give words to the feelings.

What else you can do

1. Do this same game with other kinds of objects. Examples: fuzzy/smooth, sticky/clean, wet/dry, hot/cold, heavy/light.
2. Similar games: Series One – 3; Series Two – 7; Series Six – 3; Series Seven – 5.

Colors

Grouping game

Position

Child's position: sitting on the floor or on a sofa or at a table.
Your position: facing the child.

Action

1. Select five blocks of different colors for play.
2. Place two blocks of different colors in front of your child.
3. Point to a block and say, "This is red."
4. Ask your child to give you the red one.
5. Ask your child to say the color of the block she handed to you.
6. Use only two colors at a time. But change the colors. For example, start with blue and red together. Then switch to blue and green.
7. Tell your child the name of the new color only. See if your child can remember the other color.

Aim of the game

1. Your child gives you the correct block.
2. Your child names the color of the block.

Purpose

To help your child learn colors.

What else you can do

1. Have your child tell you the names of colors in stop lights, on TV, in magazines, on signs.
2. Put together different objects that are all the same color. Ask your child what is the same about them.
3. Use crayons or colored pictures.

Blindfold Guessing

Using-the-senses game

Position

Child's position: sitting on your lap, facing away from you.
Your position: sitting on a sofa or chair.

Action

1. Place a blindfold on your child.
2. Give your child different objects to feel (spoon, rock, rattle, and so on) and ask what they are.
3. Use objects the child knows well.

Aim of the game

Your child names the objects.

Purpose

To help your child put the name of an object together with the way it feels.

What else you can do

1. This game can also be played with the sense of smell.
2. Put objects in a box. Say to your child, "Put your hand in the box. Tell me what's in the box."
3. Put four objects in a box. Say the name of one of the objects, for example, *ball.* Then say to your child, "Put your hand in the box. Take out the ball."

Make the Same Sound

Using-the-senses game

Position

Any relaxed position.

Action

1. Give your child a can and three objects that will sound differently when they are rattled in the can (marble, safety pin, a piece of wood).
2. Take the same kind of can with three objects like those your child has. Drop one of your objects in your can.
3. Don't let your child see you put the object in your can.
4. Rattle the object in your can.
5. Say to your child, Listen to this. Can you make the same sound? Make the same sound in your can."
6. If your child doesn't put the same object in his can, take the object out of your can and start over.

Aim of the game

Your child drops the same three objects in his can that you have dropped in yours.

Purpose

1. To help your child realize that different sounds can be made by putting different kinds of things together.
2. To tell what an object is by the way it sounds.

What else you can do

Similar games: Series One – 3; Series Two – 7; Series Seven – 3,5.

The Shape of Things Placed Together

Space game

Position

Child's position: sitting on the floor.

Action

1. Place about eight blocks on the floor. Put the blocks around the rim of a pie pan, magazine, square cake pan, and so on.
2. Encourage your child to do the same.
3. Remove the object from the center.
4. Explain what you and your child are doing as you go along. Example: "Let's make a circle around this pie pan. See the circle when you take away the pan? The outside of the pan makes a circle, too. See?"

Aim of the game

Your child makes a circle, square, and so on around the objects used.

Purpose

1. To help your child learn about different shapes.
2. To show how objects like the cake pan can be used as a form for a shape.
3. To show how objects like the blocks can be used to form a shape.

What else you can do

Have your child make shapes in a sand box, on paper, with finger paints.

Ring around the Roses

Communication game

Position

You and child holding hands and standing on the floor.

Action

1. Walk around in a circle while you sing "Ring Around the Roses."
2. Sit down when you get to *down* in the line all fall down.

   The song goes:

   "Ring around the roses,
   A pocket full of posies,
   Ashes, ashes, all fall *down*.

3. It is fun to change the rhythm of the song, so that your child doesn't know when you are going to say *all fall down*.

Note: Play this with as many children in the circle as you can.

Aim of the game

Your child goes down when you say *all fall down*.

Purpose

1. To help your child put actions together with words.
2. To get your child interested in games which increase her ability to do what she hears.
3. To help your child use her large muscles (moving the whole body) in response to cues she hears.

What else you can do

1. Play musical chairs.
2. Similar games: Series One – 8; Series Four – 5; Series Five – 3; Series Six – 7.

Games Listed According to Learning Areas

The ways infants and toddlers learn are different from the ways we adults learn. The 11 learning areas described in this book show you most of the ways that infants and toddlers learn. It's good to know these different learning areas. Then you can help your child explore more fully each way of learning.

You'll see the learning areas in **bold type** below. Under each learning area, you'll find the page numbers of all the games in this book that fit that area.

Use the areas listed below to get ideas for creating new games. The games in this book are good examples of how to teach a child in each learning area. These games show you the kinds of games you can create to help your child through each learning area.

We hope you will invent many games in these 11 areas that match your child's interest. By making these games, you will get a better understanding of the areas of infant learning. You'll be able to give more help to your child in each area. And the games *you* create are likely to be more fun.

Communication games

pages 8, 15, 18, 19 22, 26, 35, 39, 42, 45, 46, 54, 56, 57, 58, 60, 63, 64, 69, 71, 79.

Eyes-and-body games

Eyes-and-body games pages 11, 14, 32, 33.
Eyes-and-hands games pages 9, 13, 16, 23, 44, 47, 50.
Eyes-and-ears games pages 12, 21.

Using-the-senses games

pages 10, 24, 76, 77.

Things-don't-disappear games

pages 20, 27, 31, 36, 38, 41, 48.

Imitation games

pages 28, 49, 53, 68.

Using-a-tool games

pages 29, 30. Similar games under other areas: pages 32, 51, 56, 62.

Reversible games

pages 37, 40. Similar games under other areas: pages 28, 67.

Learn-a-clue games

pages 51, 62, 72.

Grouping games

pages 55, 66, 74, 75.

Cause-it-to-happen games

page 59. Similar games under other areas: pages 69, 77, 78.

Space games

pages 65, 67, 78.

To you...

mother
father
grandparent
favorite aunt or uncle
older sister or brother
child care professional
lover of infants and toddlers

we offer...

fun with your child
learning for you and your child
more than 65 games infants and toddlers enjoy

with hope...

that the child in your life will get a very good start.

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